



# NEWS RELEASE

Travis County *STAR Flight*

7800 Old Manor Road, Austin TX 78724

April 24, 2013

## **Local, regional, and state agencies conduct aviation firefighting training**

**Media are invited to cover training from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. at Camp Swift. Please see the provided map for directions. RSVP to Public Information Officer Lisa Block at (512) 854-7954 if you plan to attend.**

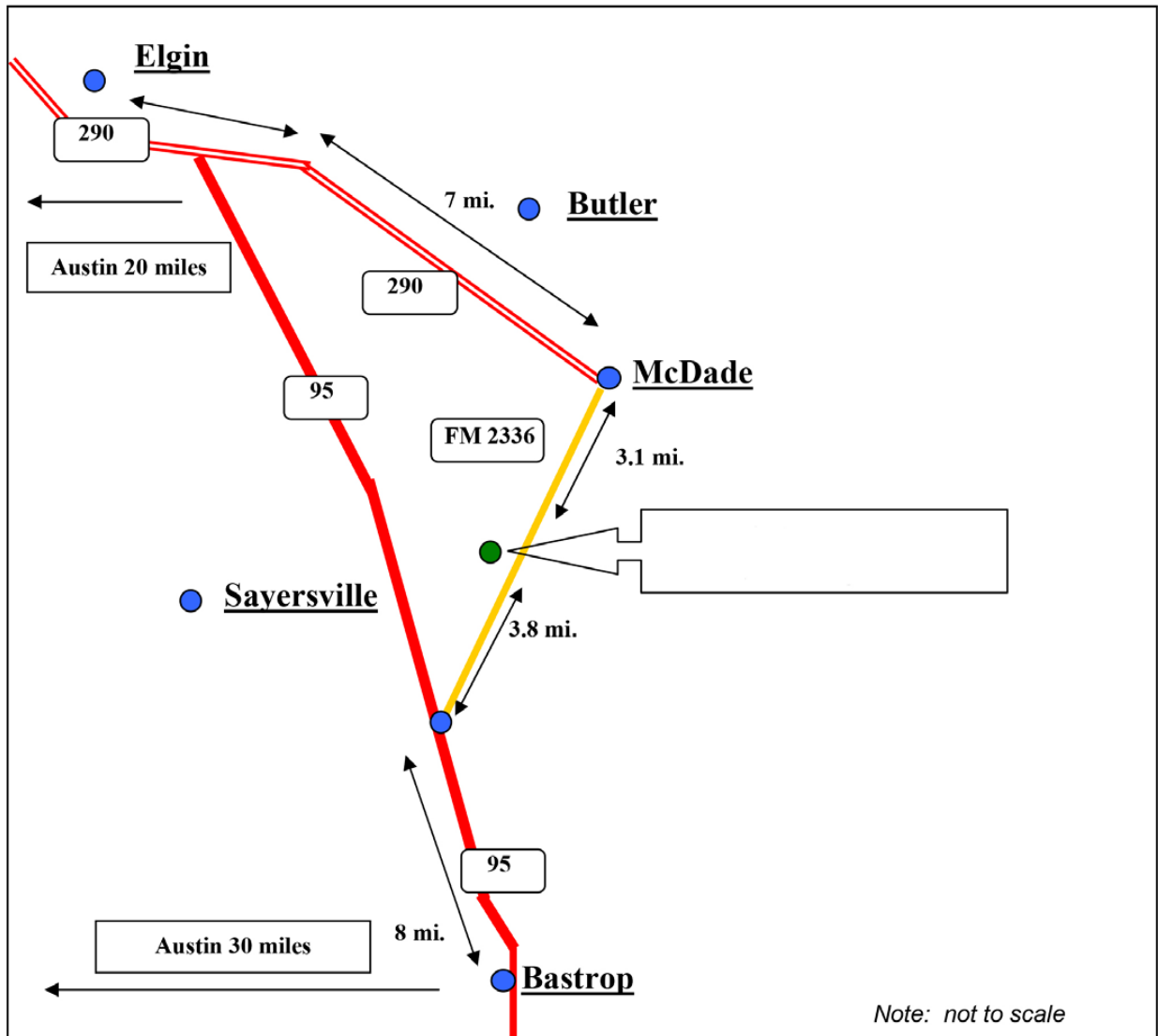
This Saturday, April 27, STAR Flight, the Austin Fire Department, Austin Police Department, Texas Military Forces, Texas A&M Forest Service, and Department of Public Safety are conducting joint wildfire aviation training at Camp Swift in Bastrop. This first-of-its-kind training in the state will help Central Texas fire department personnel learn how to work safely and effectively with aircraft.

The day-long event is scheduled to include classroom training in the morning and hands-on training in the afternoon with aircraft from multiple agencies participating. Firefighting personnel will receive training on communication between air and ground crews, the logistics of water intake and drop, and landing site selection and safety.

During the past several months, the participating agencies have worked together on every aspect of joint firefighting with aviation support to prepare for future wildfires. Wildfire knows no boundaries, so coordinated training and planning among local, regional, and state agencies help ensure a safer and more effective response to wildfires.

According to the Texas A&M Forest Service, in 2011 more than 30,000 wildfires burned approximately 4 million acres in Texas and destroyed 2,947 homes. With most of Texas still under drought conditions, the threat of wildfire remains, and the importance of joint wildfire fighting capabilities grows. Aircraft play a critical role in supporting firefighters on the ground, and with this training, firefighters will learn crucial skills used to support firefighting aircraft.

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Submitted by: Lisa Block, Public Information Officer, (512) 854-7954